WHAT WE DO KNOW ABOUT HEART ATTACKS—John W. Gofman, M.D., Professor of Medical Physics, University of California, Berkeley. G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York, 1958. 180 pages, $3.50.

What We Do Know About Heart Attacks is a persuasive analysis by Gofman of his point of view that the atherosclerotic index and the blood pressure are the two factors which will allow a physician to predict that an individual patient has a greater than average risk of developing a myocardial infarction in the near future. The book is extremely well written, very lucid, and the author asks pointed questions and attempts to answer them. A great deal of data from a variety of publications is included, but there is no bibliography, and the precise source of some of the data is not immediately available. The author does not append any data relating to the relative value of the measurement of serum cholesterol as contrasted to the atherosclerotic index as a predictive guide despite the well-known belief in some circles that the total cholesterol is about as good as the atherosclerotic index in this regard and is much less expensive to perform, and requires less equipment.

The section on diabetes is perhaps oversimplified, and the author has not proved his point that diabetes accelerates atherosclerosis solely by influencing the atherosclerotic index. There may well be other factors involved.

The reviewer regrets that the author found it necessary at times to be sarcastic when referring to scientists who disagreed with his position, but this only emerges on occasion. The book can be recommended as a highly readable, clear account of at least two factors important in the development of coronary heart disease. Many of the questions that Dr. Gofman raises are extremely important and may lead to fruitful inquiry. This is true of his question: "Why is it that certain people in the population have low levels of the lipoproteins with our usual diets while others have intermediate levels, and still others have high levels?"

* * *

CLINICAL RADIOLOGY OF ACUTE ABDOMINAL DISORDERS—Bernard S. Epstein, M.D., Chief, Department of Radiology, The Long Island Jewish Hospital, New Hyde Park, New York; Associate Clinical Professor of Radiology, Albert Einstein College of Medicine, Yeshiva University, New York, New York. Lea & Febiger, Washington Square, Philadelphia 6, Pa., 1958. 352 pages, with 406 illustrations, $15.00.

The importance of sound clinical radiology in the diagnosis of acute abdominal disorders is now well recognized. This monograph summarizes radiologic findings in a series of four chapters headed respectively: Congenital disorders, neoplastic diseases, inflammatory disorders (parasitic and granulomatous diseases, collagen disturbances, metabolic disturbances, vascular disorders), and traumatic disorders (including foreign bodies and effects of drugs).

Under the congenital disorders, the author considers the roentgen diagnostic aspects of some twenty-five different conditions ranging from diaphragmatic hernia through various mal-rotations, volvulus, reduplications, and pancreatic disorders to anomalies of the biliary tract, microcolon and congenital absence of the spleen.

The neoplastic diseases considered cover the various tumors of the stomach, small and large bowel, and the various solid abdominal viscera. The author comments on the malignant potential of polyps. This of course is a commonly repeated misconception. If one studies the prevalence of colon polyps and of colon cancer in adults between the ages of 50 and 80, one notes a ratio of approximately 100 to 1. A small percentage of colon polyps do apparently degenerate into cancer. More important, a small polypoid carcinoma is grossly indistinguishable from a small polypoid adenoma. However, the undue fear regarding polyps should not be perpetuated. The legend for figure 91 does not quite match the illustration; the latter shows a lesion in the descending colon rather than the splenic flexure and no evidence is adduced to prove that the neoplasm arose in the pre-existing polypoid lesion; it may have done so, or the lesion may have been cancer *de novo*.

The inflammatory and miscellaneous disorders include peptic and non-peptic ulcerations, the various types of colitis, adenitis, hepatitis and rarer granulomas.

The final chapter deals with traumatic lesions of the diaphragm, the solid viscera, and the intestinal tract; entities such as arteriomesenteric duodenal obstruction, radiation effects, drug effects, and allergy. In this chapter, the author notes an estimated small bowel tolerance of 2500 r (orthovoltage) and 4500 r (megavoltage). These figures require qualification as to the volume of tissue irradiated and the number of days of treatment. He notes that "the effects of radiation injury of the small bowel due to megavoltage therapy are more likely to be extensive fibrosis and perforation."

The work is well prepared and well illustrated, and covers even more than the title or size indicates. There are excellent suggestions for additional reading. The monograph can be recommended to all radiologic residents and to most clinical radiologists. The author is Chief of the Department of Radiology of the Long Island Jewish Hospital and Associate Clinical Professor of Radiology at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine in New York. There is a good author and subject index.

L. HENRY GARLAND, M.B.

* * *

WAKING BRAIN, THE—H. W. Magoun, Ph.D., Department of Anatomy, School of Medicine, University of California, Los Angeles, California; Veterans Administration Hospital, Long Beach, California. Charles C. Thomas, Publisher, Springfield, Illinois, 1958. 138 pages, $4.75.

This short book presents in a concise fashion the latest thought regarding the brain as a thinking organ. There is nobody more competent to present the material than Professor Magoun, since he and his group have been responsible for much of the research in the field. The fact that it will not be found easy to follow by most physicians is inherent in the complexity of the subject. This is not a book to be picked up and read in an evening, and it is unlikely that a reader not fairly well up on modern technics in neurophysiology will come away with more than a superficial knowledge of the subject. However, it represents the best comprehensive review of progress relating to the brain as seen from the standpoint of its dynamic function that has so far appeared.

HENRY NEWMAN, M.D.

* * *

SYSTEMIC OPHTHALMOLOGY—Second Edition—Edited by Arnold Sorsby. The C. V. Mosby Co., St. Louis, Missouri, 1958. 682 pages, with an index of 19 pages, $25.00.

This second edition is very comprehensive in its scope. The contributors are outstanding in their fields. The arrangement and the subdividing makes the book very readable as well as interesting.

The common systemic diseases involving the optical system as well as the rare ones are diagnosed and the newest treatments discussed.

This book because of its contributors' stature can be used as a handy reference.

Today an ophthalmologist is often asked to assist the referring internist in a diagnostic problem. This text book offers great help in providing a solution to many such problems.

ALFRED R. ROBBINS, M.D.